

Department of Planning and Budget 2024 Session Fiscal Impact Statement

1. **Bill Number:** SB608

House of Origin Introduced Substitute Engrossed

Second House In Committee Substitute Enrolled

2. **Patron:** Aird

3. **Committee:** Finance and Appropriations

4. **Title:** Public education; community schools; Office of Community Schools at Department of Education.

5. **Summary:** Requires the Department of Education to establish the Office of Community Schools as an office within the Department for the purpose of supporting the development and growth of community schools throughout the Commonwealth in accordance with the Virginia Community School Framework and requires the Office to establish and administer (i) the Community School Development and Implementation Planning Grant for the purpose of providing grants to school boards that seek to designate any school within the local school division as a community school to assist with the planning and implementation of such designation and (ii) the Community School Coordinator Program for the purpose of providing funding to school boards that previously completed a planning grant and now seek to employ or hire through contracted services with a qualified nonprofit organization a community school coordinator to oversee any community school designated in the local school division. The bill also establishes a state goal of prioritizing funding for such initiatives and grant programs to enable their expansion to serve the top 33 percent of public elementary and secondary schools in the Commonwealth for highest identified student percentage, as defined in the bill, based on data from the immediately preceding school year.

6. **Budget Amendment Necessary:** Yes, Item 117 and Item 124.

7. **Fiscal Impact Estimates:** Preliminary, see item 8.

8. **Fiscal Implications:** The Department of Education (DOE) would require five additional positions in order to staff a new Office of Community Schools as required in the bill and administer the two programs required by the bill. This includes three community schools specialists, one community schools liaison, and one grant fund manager. DOE estimates a total cost of \$692,520 general fund per year beginning in FY2025 for the salary, benefits, and technology for these positions.

The amount of funding necessary for the Community School Development and Implementation Planning Grants is indeterminate and depends on the amount of funding appropriated by the General Assembly for such grants and the size of such grants.

The amount of funding necessary for the Community School Coordinator program is also indeterminate and would depend on the number of schools and students that participate in the program. The bill states that the Community School Coordinator Program shall provide awards to the top 20 percent of schools in the Commonwealth for highest identified student percentage and these awards shall consist of funding for the state share of a funded SOQ secondary teacher position to hire a community school coordinator and a per-student amount at a minimum rate of 16.5 percent of per-pupil basic aid funding each fiscal year. DOE estimates that the additional state cost to fund the coordination positions at 20 percent of schools in the Commonwealth, approximately 403 schools, would be approximately \$19.5 million general fund each year, based on the average amount statewide of state funding provided for each funded secondary position. The actual cost would be dependent on the number of schools that apply for the program and the composite index of local ability-to-pay of those schools. Any impact in future years is indeterminate and would depend on the Direct Aid to Public Education budget as rebenchmarked for future biennia. According to DOE, the cost of the per-student add on, at a rate of 16.5 percent, would be \$1,411, based on the statewide average per-pupil basic aid funding. It is not clear if the per-student add on is intended to vary by division based on the composite index of local ability-to-pay. The actual cost of the per-student add on would be dependent on the number of students served.

Local school divisions would be required to match funding received for the funded position based on the composite index of local ability-to-pay. Any actual impact to local school divisions is indeterminate.

The bill also states that is the goal of the Commonwealth to prioritize funding for these programs to the top 33 percent of schools in the Commonwealth for the highest identified student percentage. There would be an increased cost to provide funding to additional schools in future years but the actual cost is indeterminate.

9. Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected: Department of Education, local school divisions

10. Technical Amendment Necessary: No

11. Other Comments: This bill is identical to HB625.